

The Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) began at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) in April of 1996. The first step was to put in place the infrastructure to communicate to 6000 employees. Eleven units were developed. Each unit represented a geographic area of the INEEL. For instance, the Engineering and Research Office Building was one unit. The Test Reactor Area was another unit. Each unit had a point of contact (POC) who was not a safety professional, but had a vested interest in safety. The unit also had a unit champion who was a manager that could direct resources and remove barriers for implementing the VPP. Each unit had an employee safety committee. These committees were quasi volunteers during the early years of the process. In general, the team members were selected based on their interest.

The first introduction of behavioral-based safety (BBS) into the VPP was training on the concept of total safety culture (TSC). TSC, which includes the Actively Caring concept, was a modification of Scott Gellors' packaged BBS program. TSC training began in 1997 at a very slow pace. However, in January of 1998 management made the training mandatory for all employees. By April 99% of the employees were trained.

Also in 1997, the passport to success program started. In this program employees, over a three month period, performed a set of safety activities that included items like reading the company VPP charter, doing an ergonomic self-assessment, and conducting a safety meeting. If they did these activities the employee was awarded a nice jacket.

Other VPP related activities performed were Supervisor and Managers (SAM) safety training. To date six separate training sessions have been conducted. These sessions train managers how to perform the safety related aspects of their jobs. Safety expositions at the local mall designed for children, safety celebrations for the various units, and safety fairs have also been performed since 1997. In addition, guest speakers, like Charlie Morecraft, have presented site-wide safety meetings on the importance of safety on an individual basis. All of these activities have been received very well by the employees.

In 1997 the INEEL also became very aggressive towards reducing cumulative trauma disorders and provided the Buddy Ergonomic Software to all employees to aid them in finding solutions to workplace design issues.

Most recently, the Worker Applied Safety Program (WASP) was introduced. WASP is now the Behavioral Observation and Feedback process of the TSC. The focus is on *behaviors* versus physical and environmental conditions in the workplace. The key purpose of the process is to increase safe behaviors and decrease *at-risk behaviors* by workers observing co-workers in the workplace. It is a process that is driven by employees, operated by employees, and observation data managed by employees.

As a part of the VPP the various units have been undergoing regular external assessments by Star Consultants, Inc. to determine how ready the site is for DOE Star Status. As interim recognition, the DOE made the INEEL a prototype site for Star Ready Status. This is a program where the units are assessed to determine whether they would meet the DOE/OSHA Star status criteria, while waiting for the real assessment. By September of 1999 all 11 units were rated as Star Ready.

In addition, a union/management summit was first held in December 1998 to continue to build a dialog on safety between management and the workers. The latest summit was held in October between the new Bectel BMXT LLC management and the unions. It is planned to hold these summits on an every other month basis.

In November of 1999 the site is going to begin to do self-assessments to determine if we are continuing with the progress made to date.

Successes:

We feel there have been several major successes. Including:

- The functioning of the employee safety teams
- The TSC process that now includes WASP
- Having all 11 units become Star Ready has been a major accomplishment
- We are also mentoring to other organizations like PN&L Hanford, Warehouser, and Simplot to help improve their safety

Injury, Illness Changes:

The INEEL is experiencing the lowest accident rates ever. We feel this is due to the VPP, as well as the increased focus on ergonomics.